



The Patriot Reader Newsletter

P.O. Box 2117

St. Augustine, FL 32085

Bill Dudley, Publisher

Michael Rothfeld, Editor

Volume 9, Issue 1

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January 2020

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Fellow Veterans,
We are nearing the end of another highly successful and active year. In addition to the annual Memorial Day, Veterans Day, Homeless Stand Down and Wreaths Across America ceremonies, the Veterans Council was involved with helping plan this year's Gathering in the Pines event at Cecil Field to honor our POW-MIA's. This has become a very successful event that is helping raise the awareness of the POW-MIA Memorial and Museum at Cecil Field. An A-7 aircraft, one of several military aircraft that will ultimately be in the stable of displays has been donated to the Park with more to come. This year the Veteran's Council was involved in the opening of the new Station 5 Fire Station on US 1 south. Sgt. Major Quinn and I participated in the ceremony by presenting the new station with an American and POW-MIA flag that was a part of the flag raising ceremony. Both flags now fly proudly at the station daily. On Nov. 22, the Veterans Council helped plan and part

icipate in the groundbreaking ceremony for the new VA Community Based Outpatient Clinic. Governor Ron DeSantis was the keynote speaker with Congressman John Rutherford and Brig. Gen. Ernie Audino USA, ret. representing Congressman Michael Waltz's office also spoke about the importance of this clinic for our veterans in this area. As many of you are aware, the Veterans Council has been pursuing this as a primary goal for over 10 years. We are pleased to now see this goal becoming a reality and thank all our local elected officials and others who assisted in helping provide a permanent home for our veteran's health care needs. Our Veterans Day Program was again a highly successful event this year and has become our signature event of the year., with over 1000 attending the ceremony. This year we recognized the 75th anniversary of D-Day. We were fortunate to have with us as a part of our program several WW II veterans who fought in the D-Day invasion. We were extremely pleased to be able to honor these veterans and their families during our ceremony.



The Veterans Council had another successful Wreaths Across America program this year with a wreath being placed on each headstone at the St. Augustine National Cemetery. Each year the turnout by our community grows larger and this year was no exception with over 300 in attendance. We will update our power point presentation to include all of this year's events and plan to show it at one of our meetings in the New Year. The Veterans Council Board of Director's would like to wish everyone, especially our veterans a Very Merry Christmas and Happy and Prosperous New Year. To all our veterans, thank you for your service and for keeping the peace.

Bill Dudley
Chairman
Veterans Council of
St. Johns County

Clyde E. Lassen State Veterans Nursing Home



We are SO very grateful for all the fantastic community support we have been shown over this holiday season. There is no way to thank all the groups who have been in to entertain, visit and bring gifts!





**The Jacksonville National Cemetery
Greetings from the Support
Committee at the Jacksonville
National Cemetery**



The Support Committee invites everyone to attend its **next scheduled meeting**. The meeting will be at **7:00pm**. The meeting will take place at Community Hospice, **4266 Sunbeam Rd., Jacksonville, FL 32257 in Conference Room A.**

**Jacksonville National Cemetery Support Committee Meetings for 2018
At Community Hospice of NE FL.
4266 Sunbeam Rd, Jacksonville, FL 32257
Hadlow Bldg – Conference Room A 7:00pm**

**DATES OF 2020 SC at JNC MEETINGS, All on Mondays
March 2nd, April 6th, May 4th
Oct 5th, Nov 2nd, Dec 7th**

**MEMORIAL DAY EVENT - Saturday, May 23rd
WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA 2020 - Saturday, December 19th.**

+++++2018/19,20 Officers of the SCJNC+++++

Chairman: Steve Spickelmier

Vice Chairman: Bill Dudley, Treasurer: John Mountcastle

Assistant Treasurer: Michael Rothfeld, Secretary: Kathy Church

Master-At-Arms: Joe McDermott, Historian: Kathy Cayton

Chaplain: Rev. Patrick A. Archuleta, Sr.

The Veterans Council of St. Johns County meets on the following dates, all are invited to attend. We meet at the county Health & Human Services building, 200 San Sebastian View, at 7 pm

Future meeting Speakers:

- Jan. 30 St. Augustine Sea Cadet Battalion, Pledge with Sea Cadets Color Guard
Beth Heath, We Can Be Heroes Foundation**
- Feb. 27 Deborah Brannon, Regent, Daughters of the American Revolution, Maria Jefferson Chapt.
Beth Heath, We Can Be Heroes Foundation**
- Mar. 26 Sharon Unger, President Veterans Village of NE FL
Shiva Thompson, Yoga 4 Change**
- Apr. 30 Carl “Jeff” Lay, 1SG US Veterans Reserve Corps. FL
Kathy Fleming, Exec. Dir., St Augustine Lighthouse, WW II Coast Guard Project**
- May 28 Dr. Roger Smith, Military History of Colonial St. Augustine**

The Veterans Council of St. Johns County, Inc.

This is Who We Are

The objective of the Veterans Council of St. Johns County, Inc. is to be of assistance to all Veterans who have been honorably discharged from any of the military branches of the United States of America and have a residence in St. Johns County.



Its formation date was July 4, 2001 in a proclamation issued by the St. Johns County Commissioners. It is comprised of representatives of the various veterans' organizations within St. Johns County such as Posts 194 and 233 of the American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars Bryan Tutton Post 2391, The Vietnam Veterans of America Leo C. Chase Chapter 1084, The Combat Veterans Motorcycle Association Post 20-2, AMVETS and The Purple Heart Society. The Veterans Council works with city and county governments and local organizations to achieve the mutual goal of providing a central agency which assists in the coordination and dissemination of matters concerning Veterans and Veterans' activities in St. Johns County.

The Veteran's Council informs and assists various organizations as they develop patriotic events. It organizes and hosts many annual events such as celebrations of Veterans Day, The Veterans Day Event this year will be on Monday, November 11, at Anastasia Baptist Church, starting at 9:00 am. This year we are celebrating Memorial Day, Wreaths Across America and Homeless Veterans Stand Down. The Council actively supports The St. Augustine National Cemetery, The Jacksonville National Cemetery, Missing In America Project, Disabled American Veterans, The USMC Oldest City Detachment, Vietnam Veterans of America, Military Officers of America Oldest City Chapter, The Navy League of the United States-St. Augustine/Palm Coast Chapter and the Cecil Field POW/MIA Memorial.



The Veterans Council organizes, supports and hosts many annual Veterans and patriotic events, i.e., Veterans Day, Memorial Day, Wreaths Across America,

Homeless Veterans Stand Down, and actively supports: The St. Augustine National Cemetery, The Jacksonville National Cemetery, Missing In America Project, Disabled American Veterans, The USMC Oldest City Detachment, Vietnam Veterans of America, Military Officers Association of America Oldest City Chapter, The Navy League of the United States- St. Augustine/Palm Coast Council, and the recently established Cecil Field POW/MIA Memorial. The Council actively supports the Clyde Lassen State Veterans Nursing Home with donations and program support.

One of the major activities of the Veterans Council is the promotion of national patriotism through education by working closely with students and teachers to foster this. To achieve this goal the Council works with the St. John's County School System. The Council provides Veteran speakers, conducts essay contests, supports the JROTC programs and donates the five documentaries it produced, featuring local Veterans. The documentaries have been provided to all Public High Schools in St. Johns County as well as local libraries, colleges, museums and veterans groups.



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According to the 2017 VA Veteran Population demographic information there are 1,525,400 veterans living in the state of Florida with 19,623 veterans living in St. Johns County and the 2018 estimate is over 23,000, with the largest group being Vietnam era veterans at over 6,711. Florida is the third largest state after California and Texas in veteran population.

The Veterans Council of St. Johns County is an amalgam of over 28 veterans' groups who send their representatives to the Council's monthly meeting. The Veterans Council meets the last Thursday of every month in the County Health and Human Services building, 200 San Sebastian View, St. Augustine, Muscovy Room at 7:00 P.M. All Veteran groups and individuals who are Veterans are invited to attend. The Council provides each County Veterans group with monthly meeting Minutes and Agenda.

Each month the Council meeting has speakers addressing current veterans re

lated issues. The Council has a well received monthly newsletter, The Patriot Reader, (all issues are posted at: www.veteranscouncilsjc.org/newsletter.htm) that is emailed to thousands of veterans and veterans' groups. The newsletter contains monthly events, educational articles, service stories of local veterans and meeting dates. All are encouraged to submit articles and pictures. The Council also maintains a website (www.veteranscouncilsjc.org) that can accessed for daily Council information and links to VA resources, VA Health releases and newspaper articles that discuss veterans' issues. The Council has a very large Facebook presence (Veterans Council of St. Johns County, FL) and posts information daily.

The Council proudly supports the Veterans Treatment Court. The Council financially assists veterans that are enrolled in the program with temporary loans for rent, food, car payments, utilities and clothing. The Veterans Treatment Court is dedicated to helping veterans address the underlying problems which led to their involvement in the criminal justice system. The Veterans Council provides mentors to each participant, "Battle Buddies", who are available 24/7 to assist with any issues that arise. Veterans' Courts make the community safer and the Council assists by providing room, board, transportation and may pay bills for the veteran until he/she are able to become a contributing member of society.

The Veterans Council of St. Johns County welcomes all new county veterans and encourages them to attend one of its meetings.

The St. Johns County Veterans Service Officers are: Joseph McDermott, Rick Rees, and Travis Neidig. They are located in the St. Johns County Health & Human Services Building, 200 San Sebastian View, St. Augustine, FL. 32084. Their phone number is 904-209-6160.

The St. Augustine Community Based Outpatient Clinic, named after Leo C. Chase Jr. , the first soldier from the county Killed in Action in Vietnam, is located at 100 Deerfield Preserve Blvd., St. Augustine, FL 32086.

Today, December 14, 2019, was Wreaths Across America day at the St. Augustine National Cemetery on Marine Street.

Two Men and a Truck delivered wreaths for those who gave their last full measure of devotion in service to their county. All 1,230 places of rest received a wreath.



The Veterans Council of St. Johns County wish to thank our sponsors and supporters for their generous outpouring of financial support.



Article & Photos by Michael Isam



Military Heritage Museum

900 WEST MARION AVENUE • PUNTA GORDA • FL 33950 • 941-575-9002 • WWW.MILITARYHERITAGEMUSEUM.ORG

HON. SEAN O'KEEFE
HONORARY CHAIRMAN
FORMER NASA ADMINISTRATOR
FORMER SECRETARY OF THE NAVY

GARY P. BUTLER
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
GBUTLER@FREEDOMINSTFREE.ORG

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MARILYN SMITH-MOONEY

VICE PRESIDENT
MICHAEL WOOSTER
CDR. U.S. NAVAL RESERVE, RET

SECRETARY
ROBERT "SAM" HARRIS
VETERAN – U.S. AIR FORCE

TREASURER
CHARLES KERSCH
VETERAN – U.S. ARMY

DIRECTORS

FREDRIC BUCKINGHAM
BRIG GEN (RET), U.S. AIR FORCE

ALOIS "AL" BURDA III
VETERAN – U.S. NAVY

JACK "MOE" HOWARD
VETERAN – U.S. ARMY

REX R. KOCH
VETERAN – U.S. ARMY

LYNNE MATTHEWS

C.J. METCALFE

November 21, 2019

Veterans Council of St. Johns County, Inc.
P O Box 2117
St. Augustine, FL 32085

Attn: Mr. William Dudley
Chairman

Dear Bill,

We are so fortunate and grateful to have your support. Your contribution to this museum not only provides critical support of our organization but also underscores your deep commitment to our brave men and women who unselfishly protect the freedoms of all Americans.

Every day we have a museum visitor who breathes life into our more than 20,000 artifacts. Their personal stories remind us of the courage, honor and valor of American Soldiers, Marines, Sailors, Airmen and Coast Guardsmen. Your support of the Military Heritage Museum honors these great men and women!

Again, thank you for your generous donation consisting of a set of documentary videos. What makes them even more valuable is the fact that the documentaries were produced by your organization.

The museum is an IRS-Designated 501 (c) (3) nonprofit organization. As such, Donations to our organization qualify as tax deductible under Section 170 of the Internal Revenue Code. No goods or services were offered.

Sincerely,

Gary Butler
Executive Director

/cas

THE MILITARY HERITAGE MUSEUM IS A 501(C)(3) NONPROFIT CORPORATION, CLASSIFIED BY THE FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND CONSUMER SERVICES AS AN EDUCATIONAL FACILITY AND THEREFORE EXEMPT FROM REGISTRATION WITH THAT DEPARTMENT. IN COMPLIANCE WITH IRS RULES, THE MOST RECENTLY FILED IRS FORM 990 IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST TO THE MILITARY HERITAGE MUSEUM'S OFFICE.

Chairman William Dudley and The Veterans Council congratulates Commander **Derry Greene and Greg White** of American Legion Post 194 on its groundbreaking for its new children's park.

AL Post 194 through the money raised this year with Clays For A Cause, we decided to surprise The American Legion Post 194 with a check for \$25,000 to build a park for the Kids Safe Zone. Two of my great friends, Greg White and Derry Greene, are leading a team of veterans to do wonderful things in our community--this being one of those endeavors. I was fortunate enough to meet Greg about a year ago after learning of Kids Safe Zone. Soon after meeting, Greg asked me about fund raising for a park next to their post. I called another great friend, Brett Kuzioan with Castle Bay Designs, and asked if he'd help professionally design a park with me and of course he accepted. The groundbreaking, my first formal groundbreaking event ever, was this past Saturday and included Commissioner Jimmy Johns as well as Sheriff David Shoar. Sheriff Shoar donated another \$10,000 that same morning so now we have \$35,000 to stretch in order to help build a beautiful park for at-risk pre-teens and teens. I was, and am, very honored to be a part of this effort. A big thanks to Brett and all of the great friends that contributed to Clays For A Cause so that we can make these great things happen in our LOCAL community.



Veterans to see virtual hearings at Board of Veterans Appeals in early 2020

Veterans can expect the Board of Veterans Appeals to launch a nationwide availability of virtual hearing technology in 2020. This technology will allow Veterans to connect with the Board via their mobile phone or laptop when using the VA Video Connect app.



With virtual hearings, Veterans will have the choice to participate in their Board hearing from the comfort of their own home. Currently, Veterans can only participate in their Board hearing in Washington D.C., or at a VA facility with video capability. This limitation is especially challenging when the nearest VA facility is hours away or if a Veteran must travel last minute.

“Customer Service is a top priority for VA and providing access to virtual hearings supports this,” says Chairman of the Board, Cheryl Mason.

Successful testing

Virtual hearing technology is based off the telehealth platform, which has seen amazing results. In fiscal 2019, more than 900,000 Veterans used VA telehealth services, a 17% increase from the previous year. Whether it’s telehealth or virtual hearings, it all comes down to one thing: choice for Veterans.

The Board began testing virtual hearings in July. It collaborated testing with VA’s Office of Information and Technology. The Board also worked with Veteran Service Organizations and advocates across the country. The good results showcase how this needed technology helps Veterans.

In the past, if a Veteran had to change plans at the last minute, he or she would need to be reschedule the hearing. This results in a longer wait time.

In action

This happened recently when a Veteran had to unexpectedly travel at the last minute. Fortunately, a Board hearing coordinator was able to help the Veteran access the proper application. They then ran the necessary connectivity checks, and instead of cancelling, the Veteran was able to proceed with a hearing. That hearing included multi-state connections, including the Veterans Law Judge (VLJ) who was in Washington, D.C. Thus, the Veteran did not have to wait longer for a hearing.

In another instance, a Veteran could not travel to the regional office for the hearing due to work and family schedule conflicts. The Veteran’s representative suggested that the Veteran try a virtual hearing, knowing that VA was currently testing that technology. The Veteran agreed and had a successful hearing via cell phone.

In early November, the Board expedited a terminally ill Veteran’s hearing request using virtual hearing technology. The Board made sure that the technology was ready and working so that the hearing could take place. The Veteran was able to testify at the hearing from a hospital bed while the Veteran’s representative was at the regional office and the VLJ was in Washington, D.C. In the end, the Veteran’s testimony was very helpful to the appeal.

With nationwide availability of virtual hearing technology on the horizon, Veterans will have greater access to Board hearings—and more choice and control in their appeals process.

For more information about the Board of Veterans’ Appeals, please visit: <https://www.bva.va.gov/>.

This blog was written by the Board of Veterans Appeals.

From Moe Moyer, on why the POW/MIA Flag is flown under the US flag and above the State flag.

In the world of 'ensign display' the order of precedence is usually / normally dictated by protocol. Protocol often relies on Chain-of Command, Authority Levels, and sometimes Federal or State Law to help regulate the order of precedence. In regards to the POW/MIA ensign; since 10 August 1990, after Congress passed and the Commander-in-Chief signed Public Law 101-355 which amended 36 USC 189 Sec 2. and stated in part: " (the) POW/MIA flag is hereby recognized officially and designated as the symbol of our Nation's concern and commitment to resolving as fully as possible the fates of Americans still prisoner, missing and unaccounted for.... " thus making the POW/MIA Ensign a Congressionally / Federal approved ensign. the only other one besides the American Ensign. Since it is a symbol of our Nation, it takes precedence over ALL State / Territory ensigns. FYI: currently the POW/MIA Ensign represents 82, 080 currently from 1941 through today that are still Missing in Action / Unaccounted For. Of that total number, 1 126 are from the State of Florida.



Veterans Council of St. Johns County, Inc. Minutes of December 19, 2019

Officers present: Chairman Bill Dudley, Secretary Michael Rothfeld, Vice Chairman Ray Quinn, Treasurer John Mountcastle

Chairman Dudley called the meeting to order at 1900 hours

Chairman Dudley led the Pledge to the Flag and SGM Ray Quinn gave the Invocation

Minutes were approved as presented Treasurer's Report were approved as presented

Introduction of Guests: None

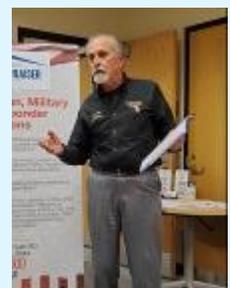
Speakers: Eddie Creamer, St. Johns County Property Appraiser & Nikki Pontello, PA Office Manager. Mr. Creamer first spoke about of importance of filing for a Homestead Exemption which could then qualify you for other exemptions. Ms Pontello then spoke about Veterans Exemptions i.e., Veteran & Active Duty Military Exemptions. The Veterans Exemptions are: Disabled Veterans Exemption, Totally & Permanently Disabled Veterans, Seniors Combat Related Veterans Exemption, Surviving Spouses of Veterans who died while on active duty exemption, & Deployed Servicemembers exemptions.

There are requirements to qualify for each exemption, so please call 904-827-5500 or email customerservice@sjcpa.us for forms and with questions.

Committee Reports:

Mac: Smoking is not allowed on any VA property, Veterans with student loans now have them forgiven, the VA now has a contract out for years to stop suicides and provide services.

John: VTC sent 10 Mentors to a Melbourne Conference to discuss state-wide issues. Now 26 in program, 23 have graduated in past 3 years. Currently 16 active mentors.



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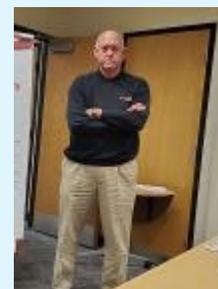
VVA 1084 invites all to “Beach Blast off” from 4 to 12 pm New Years Eve.

Ray: Wreaths Across America: was a huge success, with about 300 in attendance. 1400 Wreaths were placed by all Headstones. There is some money left which will go towards next years WAA.



Bill: Veterans Day was a huge success, with over 1000 attending. Plans soon for an AAR and discussion of next year’s celebration. We will prepare a year end summary and update our Power Point to include this year’s activities.

Steve: WAA at Jax National very successful. VC of Duval County re-organizing. April 8,9,19, 2020 VA Action Cwnter announcement to come.



Kathy: MIAP: looking for volunteers

For the Good ofThe Order:

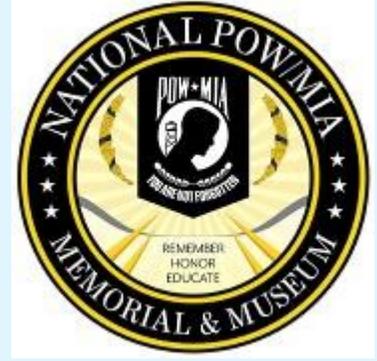
Meeting adjourned at 8:36 pm, The next meeting of the Veterans Council will be on Thursday, January 30, 2020, 7 pm in the Health & Human Services Building, 200 San Sebastian View.

Future speakers:

- Jan. 30 St. Augustine Sea Cadet Battalion, Pledge with Sea Cadets Color Guard
Beth Heath, We Can Be Heroes Foundation
- Feb. 27 Deborah Brannon, Regent, Daughters of the American Revolution, Maria
Jefferson Chapt.
Wendy Lay, Veterans Expo at First Coast Technical College
- Mar. 26 Sharon Unger, President Veterans Village of NE FL
Shiva Thompson, Yoga 4 Change
- Apr. 30 Kathy Fleming, Exec Dir, Lighthouse WW II Coast Guard Project
Carl “Jeff” Lay, 1SG US Veterans Reserve Corps. FL
- May 28 Dr. Roger Smith, Military History of Colonial St. Augustine
- June 25 Reserved pending confirmation

News and Updates

PHASE I Groundbreaking Registration



Greetings!

You are cordially invited to attend the POW/MIA Memorial Phase 1 Groundbreaking ceremony on January 18, 2020.

The Chapel of the High Speed Pass was the initial stage of the POW/MIA Memorial Phase 1 project and now it's time to complete Phase 1. This phase will focus on honoring those who gave their lives while serving at NAS Cecil Field from 1941-1999. There will be a Jet Display area, a replica of the Cecil Field runways, reflection areas, and a brick area known as Benefactor Plaza where the donor bricks will be located. The site plan to the right shows the four static display areas that commemorate the history of aircraft flown at NAS Cecil Field and is the next step in the development of the National POW/MIA Memorial & Museum.

Land preparation for the final part of Phase I of the project is expected to begin the week of January 20, 2020. To celebrate this milestone, there will be a Groundbreaking Ceremony on Saturday, January 18, 2020 from 10:00am until 2:00pm. The actual ceremony will begin at 11:00 sharp followed by lunch.

Register for Groundbreaking Ceremony

We are now qualified to receive available loan property from the NNAM (National Naval Aviation Museum) in Pensacola, FL. This includes static display aircraft for the Phase 1 area. We now have an A-7

Corsair BuNo 153150 on loan to us. This aircraft is currently located in a hanger at Cecil Commerce Center and will be the first aircraft for display in the new

Phase 1 area.

NATIONAL DESIGNATION

A team has been assembled to work with our Senators, Representatives, and other organizations in Washington, D.C. on legislation to recognize this property as The National POW/MIA Memorial for the Nation. Our goal is to have this completed in 2020! If you would like more information or would like to become involved, please visit our website at www.powmiamemorial.org for updates or email us at powmiamemorial@gmail.com to request to be added to the email (or mail) distribution list for our upcoming newsletter!

Support the National POW-MIA Memorial

Purchase a Brick

"In Honor of" Bricks

Bricks can be purchased “in honor of” or “in remembrance of” a family member/friend, or can be purchased with the donor’s name. The bricks will be for any and all patriots – those who have or are currently serving in any branch of the U.S. armed forces, those that serve our country in other capacities, and those donors who are enabling us to establish this memorial to honor all our former Prisoners of War and NEVER FORGET those still Missing in Action. Bricks will be placed at the Benefactor Plaza. The choice is yours.

St. Augustine Chapter 6, Disabled American Veterans

Ride in comfort to your appointment at the VA Medical Center in Gainesville.

The van leaves no later than 6AM from the VA Clinic located at 195 Southpark Blvd on the corner of Old Moultrie

To schedule your seat, please contact the VA Clinic at 904-823-2954, and ask for Veteran Van Scheduling

Round trip Van Service for Veterans is [HERE](#)

From St. Augustine, FL to the VA Medical Center in Gainesville.

The van will depart Gainesville approximately 2pm to arrive back in St. Augustine about 4pm.

The van IS NOT equipped to transport wheelchair patients.

We are asking that reservations be made 1 (one) week in advance.

All reservations are on a first come, first serve basis. When the seats are full, the seats are full.

To schedule a seat on the van,

please call the VA Clinic at 904-823-2954 and ask for Veteran Van Scheduling.

If you have MORE THAN ONE APPOINTMENT on the same date, please inform the scheduler.

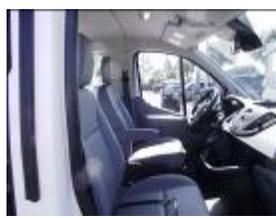
Please have the following information available: Date and time of appointment(s), and which department(s).

Inform the scheduler of where you live. We have pick-up points in Palatka and other places.

As with all things VA, there are certain rules and regulations:

NO ALCOHOL, NO FIREARMS or OTHER WEAPONS and NO SMOKING.

(We don't make the rules, we just have to follow them.)



*Save The Date Phase 1
Groundbreaking Ceremony*

Save The Date – January 18th, 2020



Please mark your calendars to attend the National POW/MIA Memorial Phase I Groundbreaking ceremony scheduled for Saturday, January 18, 2020. The location of Groundbreaking is 6112 POW-MIA Memorial Pkwy, Jacksonville, FL 32221 at Cecil Commerce Center.

Phase I of the project includes the Chapel restoration and area to the north of the Chapel which will display the four (4) aircraft that flew out of Cecil Field. The Chapel restoration is nearing completion and the jet display and memorial brick areas have been designed, permitted, and the project is 59% funded!

Various dignitaries will participate in the groundbreaking ceremony during this family event.

Florida Irrigation Society Northeast Chapter

We would like to take this opportunity and thank the Florida Irrigation Society Northeast Chapter for their generous service and donation to install a new irrigation system at the Chapel.

This entity is comprised of many companies located in the Northeast Florida area that include: Allstar Irrigation, B&L Landscape, NFI Professional Outdoor Supply & Push Landscapes.

We are honored to have these patriotic companies' partner with our mission.

From John Mountcastle

On January 1, 2020, Veterans with service-connected disabilities (and some others) will have physical access to military exchanges, commissaries and other morale, welfare and recreation facilities.

Veterans need VHIC for in-person Commissary, Military Exchange, MWR access - Vantage Point

<https://www.blogs.va.gov/VAntage/68479/veterans-need-vhic-for-in-person-commissary-military-exchange-and-mwr-access/?sfns=mo>



From the Dept. of Defense

"Starting Jan. 1, 2020, the Department of Defense is expanding access to military commissaries, exchanges, and morale, welfare and recreation facilities for certain Veterans and caregivers. Those eligible for access include all service-connected Veterans, Purple Heart recipients, former Prisoners of War (POW), and those approved and designated as the primary family caregivers of eligible Veterans. To acquire the in-person privileged access, all eligible Veterans must obtain a Veteran Health Identification Card (VHIC)."

Please join us on Thursday, December 19th as St Johns County Property Appraiser Eddie Creamer speaks to our Council.



ST. JOHNS COUNTY
PROPERTY APPRAISER
Eddie Creamer

Disabled Veteran, Military & First Responder Exemptions

Disabled Veteran Exemption	Totally & Permanently Disabled Veterans Exemption
Seniors Combat - Related Disabled Veterans Exemption	Surviving Spouses of Veterans Who Died While on Active Duty Exemption
Totally & Permanently Disabled First Responders Exemption	Deployed Servicemembers Exemption
Surviving Spouses of First Responders	If not claiming a homestead elsewhere, deployed or active duty military may rent their home & maintain their homestead without any restrictions

4030 Lewis Speedway, Suite 203
Saint Augustine, FL 32084
904-827-5500
WWW.SJCPAUS

This PSA was produced by Rep. Paul Renner at the St. Francis Barracks Officers Club with the assistance of the Veterans Council of St. Johns County. The veterans shown in the video are all from St. John County. There is a WW II, Korea, Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan veteran each stating a powerful message about their service to this country and the state of the nation today.



Please feel free to share.

https://youtu.be/_96n7YtWzyA

YouTube (Unlisted): https://youtu.be/_96n7YtWzyA

Letter to Senator Rick Scott re Senate Bill S. 133-Merchant Mariners of World War II Congressional Gold Medal Act of 2019

Please send out the attached letter to Sen. Rubio & Scott. Our Merchant Marines have been ignored for too many years and deserve our support.

I encourage you to urge Senator Rick Scott to co-sponsor and support Senate Bill S. 133 -Merchant Mariners of World War II Congressional Gold Medal Act of 2019. As Pat Du Mont pointed out, the easiest way to do this is through the Navy League Voice to Congress link:

<https://www.votervoice.net/NavyLeague/Campaigns/59995/Respond>

Two Men and a Truck owner Pete Ruffing and Veterans Council Chairman William Dudley after unloading 138 boxes of wreaths at their warehouse in Jacksonville in preparation for Wreaths Across America at the St. Augustine National Cemetery on Saturday, December 14.



Veterans' Diseases Associated with Agent Orange

The VA recognizes and assumes certain cancers and other health problems to be related to a Veterans' qualifying military service and associated with exposure to Agent Orange and other herbicides. Veterans and their survivors maybe eligible for disability compensation or survivors' benefits for these diseases. Here is a current list:

1. AL Amyloidosis
2. Chronic B-cell Leukemias
3. Chloracne (or similar acneform disease)
4. Diabetes Mellitus Type 2
5. Hodgkin's Disease
6. Ischemic Heart Disease
7. Multiple Myeloma
8. Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma
9. Parkinson's Disease
10. Peripheral Neuropathy, Acute and Subacute
11. Porphyrria Cutanea Tarda
12. Prostate Cancer
13. Respiratory Cancers (including lung cancer)
14. Soft Tissue Sarcomas
(other than osteosarcoma, chondrosarcoma, Kaposi's sarcoma, or mesothelioma)

Children with Birth Defects:

VA presumes certain birth defects in children of Vietnam and Korean Veterans associated with Veteran's qualifying military service.



REMEMBER WHAT OUR MEDAL STANDS FOR:

- RED:** REPRESENTS THE THREE ANCIENT VIETNAMESE EMPIRES OF TONKIN, ANNAM AND COCHIN.
- YELLOW:** THE IMPERIAL COLOR OF VIET NAM.
- GREEN:** SURROUNDED BY EXPANSIVE JUNGLE.

From David Treffinger: the USAF Band, WW II Holiday Flashback

<https://eur03.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.youtube.com%2Fembed%2FkhQN5ylb3H0%3Frel%3D0&data=02%7C01%7C%7C562cef8b17c94ad72e2308d783d80f4c%7C84df9e7fe9f640afb435aaaaaaaaaaaa%7C1%7C0%7C637122836295489042&sdata=XDhEU3iw8W0JUw09Q1%2FXWA4XE4n4fTiSKURd1kCoOMU%3D&reserved=0>



Preserving The Legacy



The Navy SEAL Museum was founded in 1985 and honors the Navy SEALs with its location in Fort Pierce, Florida—the training site of the first “Frogmen” of World War II who have earned a proud place in the Navy SEAL lineage. The Navy SEAL Memorial, the only one of its kind dedicated to the Navy SEALs and their predecessors, underscores the Museum’s tribute to these warriors. The names of all who have died in training or service to their country are etched in the granite walls.

From the Patrol Boat Riverines (PBRs) that enabled the Navy SEALs in navigating and dominating the rivers and canals in Vietnam to a replica of Osama Bin Laden’s compound in Abbottabad Pakistan, the Navy SEAL Museum houses an array of artifacts that showcase several perilous SEAL missions and tell the story of their forerunners.

Beyond educational exhibits, the Museum safeguards and shares the legacy of the world’s premier special operations force. The Museum not only traces the history of the Navy SEALs, but also provides guests with an uncommon perspective of our nation’s constant vigil for freedom spanning more than 70 years. Through their dedication to duty and relentless resolve, SEALs have “paid the bill” for American freedoms for decades. The Museum helps to shed light on the cost of this elite preparedness.

The Navy SEALs’ origins are linked to Naval Combat Demolition Units and Underwater Demolition Teams that served in World War II—and their descendants have protected American interests in nearly every major military conflict since then, including contemporary operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. Navy SEALs have resolutely been an integral part of the offensive in the ongoing war against terrorism.

Officially known as the National Navy UDT-SEAL Museum, the facility chronicles the past of these brave warriors. It was recognized by an act of Congress in 2007 as a National Museum. The Museum promotes family-friendly public education through interactive exhibits and artifacts, allowing patrons the opportunity to explore the history and heritage of the Navy SEALs, while honoring the fallen at the Navy SEAL Memorial Wall.

The initiatives of the Museum provide a glimpse into Navy SEAL training, as well as preserving the Navy SEAL standards of excellence: **To place the welfare of other before self. To demonstrate uncompromising integrity. To lead and be led. To never quit. To persevere and thrive in adversity. To demand discipline. To expect innovation.**

**3300 N. Highway A1A
N. Hutchinson Island
Ft. Pierce, FL 34949
Phone: 772.595-5845**

<https://www.navysealmuseum.org/about-the-navy-seal-museum/preserving-the-legacy>

Grainy sonar image leads diver to WWII aircraft in St. Johns River

Grumman F4F Wildcat fighter believed to have crashed off St. Johns County between 1943-1946 News4JAX

ST. JOHNS COUNTY, Fla. – Imagine taking a dive into the St. Johns River and coming face-to-face with a treasure you never imagined you'd experience. Thomas Keisler, a diver with Underwater Criminal Investigators, said his group was approached about three years ago by a local fisherman with a sonar image of a possible aircraft on the river bottom. Keisler said he first thought the aircraft may have been a drug runner plane, but he has discovered it was a military fighter believed to have crashed sometime between 1943 and 1946.



“The F4F Wildcat is one of the first aircraft to go against the Japanese during World War II, used against the Japanese in World War II,” Keisler said.

Keisler wants to keep some details under wraps, including the aircraft's precise location and how deep it is underwater. Over the years, Keisler and his team have made several dives to the crash site. Keisler said it took time before they truly understood what was below the surface.

“You don't really see anything,” Keisler said. “You see it through touch. You see it through feel.” The artifacts within the wreckage helped reveal the mystery. “We found the 50-caliber machine gun feeder. That was a dead giveaway that it was military,” Keisler said. “We've got bits and pieces of engine -- the engine with serial numbers on it.”

Keisler says the cockpit cover was fully intact, along with the aircraft's canopy cover. Keisler says that would be considered the aircraft's windshield today

Dozens more artifacts were found, including an oil cooler underneath the wing. Instruments found inside the cockpit were also in decent shape. Anyone interested in military history would be fascinated by their finds.

For Keisler, a turning point in his investigation was finding handwriting on the navigational plotter board.

“Back in WWII, they didn't have computers to do this work for them. To navigate with, they had to hand write everything down,” Keisler said. “With the discovery of the handwriting, we were able to recreate his flight pattern, the pilot's flight pattern.”

Even more unique, four fingerprints were found fully intact, like they were sealed in time. Keisler said the most likely scenario is the pilot got grease or oil on his hands during a pre-flight safety check.

“And transferred it on the navigational plotter board that they would carry in and out of the aircraft at the time,” Keisler said. “After the crash, the marine grove grew on top of the fingerprints and the pilot's handwriting, ultimately protecting it.”

Keisler said the team has identified two potential pilots who would have been flying this plane. Investigations are still being done, but he says they looked through the history and found no living family. Keisler said the artifacts have been turned over to the Naval History and Heritage Command.

Keisler built a table model to give a better sense of what the aircraft currently looks like underwater. His goal is to eventually bring this treasure back to the surface.

Blue Water Navy Veterans' disability claims to be decided beginning Jan.1, 2020



Did you serve in the offshore waters of the Republic of Vietnam between Jan. 9, 1962, and May 7, 1975? If so, then you're considered a Blue Water Navy (BWN) Veteran.

On Jan. 1, 2020, the Blue Water Navy Act of 2019 goes into effect. This Act was signed into law on Jun. 25, and extends the presumption of herbicide exposure, such as Agent Orange, to BWN Veterans who served as far as 12 nautical miles from the shore of Vietnam and have since developed one of 14 conditions related to exposure. Some of these conditions include Type 2 diabetes, Parkinson's disease, many forms of cancer and others. You may now be eligible for disability compensation and other benefits. In addition, if you're a Veteran who served in the Korean Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) between Sept. 1, 1967, and Aug. 31, 1971, you may also qualify for compensation and benefits for yourself and your family members.

How do I know if I'm eligible?

The best way to find out if you're eligible is to work with an accredited claims representative or Veterans Affairs (VA) regional office to understand eligibility requirements before filing a claim. You don't need to prove contact with herbicides to be eligible.

How do I file a claim for compensation benefits?

You can file an initial claim (that has not been previously decided by VA), by submitting Form 21-526EZ, Application for Disability Compensation and Related Compensation Benefits. You can also contact an accredited Veterans Service Organization (VSO) to assist you with your application. To access a list of VA-approved VSOs, [CLICK HERE](#). You may also contact your state's Veterans agency should you need additional assistance with the application process.

What if I've previously filed a claim that was denied?

VA will be using the new law to automatically review claims that are currently with the VA review process or under appeal. However, if you had an herbicide exposure claim with one or more presumptive conditions denied in the past, you are urged to file a new claim. When you begin the claims process, be sure to provide or identify any new and relevant information regarding your claim, such as the dates the vessel you were serving on traveled through the offshore waters of the Republic of Vietnam or updated medical information.

Submit a VA Form 20-0995, Decision Review Request: Supplemental Claim. How should survivors and dependents apply for initial Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) Claim for a Veteran who died of presumptive condition?

Eligible survivors and dependents must meet certain conditions to receive DIC. To learn more about this process, [CLICK HERE](#). If found to be eligible, there are several ways to file a claim, including:

By mail, using VA Form 21P-534EZ., In person at a VA regional office. An accredited claims representative or VSO.

What benefits will I receive if my claim is approved?

If you are deemed eligible, you may receive a monthly disability compensation payment and free healthcare related to your disability. The amount of compensation you may receive is determined by your diagnosed condition and level of disability.

Another important component of the Blue Water Navy Act includes changes to the VA Home Loan program. VA now allows the no-down payment option on guaranteed home loans, regardless of mortgage amount for ALL Veterans. In addition, there is a reduction in the funding fee required for Reservists and National Guard borrowers and other changes.

More information and resources on the Blue Water Navy Act, eligibility, how to file a claim, and changes to the VA Home Loan Program can be found online

Renee Johnson is a public affairs specialist for the Veterans Benefits Administration.



One Bunker Ave.
Green Cove Springs, FL 32043

December 12, 2019

The Veterans Council
P.O. Box 2117
St Augustine, FL 32085

Dear The Veterans Council,

I would like to express my appreciation for your support of the museum. Your donation of \$500 will assist in maintaining and creating museum displays. Thanks to your generosity we will be able to expand our efforts and present more artifacts.

As we are a 501 (C) (3) not for profit organization, your contribution is tax deductible to the extent authorized by law.

Your support demonstrates your commitment to supporting Clay County and assisting us in honoring those citizen soldiers that have contributed so much to the defense of our freedom.

Sincerely,

John Murphy

President

OFFICIAL REGISTRATION AND FINANCIAL INFORMATION MAY BE OBTAINED FROM THE DIVISION OF CONSUMER SERVICES BY CALLING TOLL-FREE (800-435-7352) WITHIN THE STATE. REGISTRATION DOES NOT IMPLY ENDORSEMENT, APPROVAL, OR RECOMMENDATION BY THE STATE."

VVA 1092 Clay County sponsors Brick Dedication



VVA Chapter 1092, in conjunction with Marine Corps League 990 Gator Detachment, sponsored a dedication of memorial bricks for the 48 Alachua County men killed in Vietnam from 1965-1972 on December 9 at the Alachua City Hall.

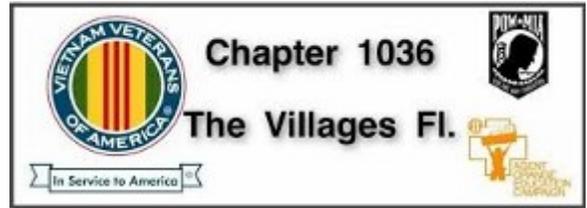
Each name was read off and a bell sounded for each. The fallen servicemen:

Vernon Thomas Carter Jr., Charles Richard Geiger, Charles Andy Gordon, Noah Morris Kraft, Ronald Michael Rigdon, Charles Roland Townsend, Norman Kenneth Bristow, Lindy Edward Henry, Robert Ivan Rice, Leslie Eugene Rembert, Henry Bertram Wright, Benjamin Gaines Lang, Tommy Lee Hankison, Samuel Harrell, Martin Robert Beck, Joshua Welch Jr., Ross Thomas Hulslander, James Boston Jr., Robert Lee Shorter, Randolph Wright Ford, David Eric Wieland, Johnny Lee Proctor, Robert Eugene Thompson, Wesley Ira Goswick, Larry Will Bloodsworth, Terry Durand Graham, Johnell Witherspoon, John Winslow Lawrence Jr., Henry Dennis Babers, Freddie Lee Kleckley, Willie Lee Brown Jr., Frederick M. Vickery III, Carl Post Hetrick, James Milton, Jefferson, Eugene Scott Hancock, Auburn Dale McComb, Neal Arthur Smith, James Mikel Runnels, Frederick Jordan Hampton, James Richard Golding, Charles Edward Roland, Lorenzo Columbus Maulden, Thomas Wayne Peterson, Michael Ward Kirkpatrick, Marcus Claude Jones, Jerome Cordell Winters, Manuel Eduardo Mesa Jr., Donald Lee Hettich

Submitted by David Treffinger

VVA 1036's Thomstatter helps Pennsylvania

Thanks to VVA Chapter 1036 board member John Thomstatter in The Villages, Pennsylvania is the latest state to have located all of the photos – 3,150 – of those who died during the Vietnam War.



After Thomstatter, a Johnstown, Pa., native, finished his goal of locating the photo of every Floridian on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall in Washington, he set his sights on the Keystone State.

Using newspaper archives, yearbooks, grave memorial sites, libraries, and public record locators, and working with retired military officers and a genealogist, Thomstatter estimated, he and his team have put in thousands of hours of work to locate the records of all of Pennsylvania's fallen Vietnam vets in the years-long quest.

Last month the photo of Air Force Master Sgt. Matthew N. Harris Jr. of Philadelphia, who died in Saigon at the age of 34 in 1965, was located.

Sometimes, the search begins with just a nickname, or a story from a service buddy. Sometimes, like in Harris' case, dates and information on government records don't match up, complicating the search. After years of scouring databases, researchers still have little information on the history or family of the Philadelphia noncommissioned Air Force officer, who is buried across the country in the Golden Gate National Cemetery.

But even in the most difficult of cases, giving up is never an option, Thomstatter said. "I tell you, every soldier you research, you find out the sacrifices they've made, and it just drives you to look for more," said Thomstatter. "It's very, very rewarding."

The photos of the fallen are displayed on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund's Wall of Faces, a digital database aiming to personalize each of the names inscribed on the memorial with a photo and information about the service member.

Each year, over 5 million people visit the rows of names at the Vietnam memorial in Washington, said Heidi Zimmerman, vice president of programs and communication for the memorial fund.

"Behind every one of those names, there's a face and a story," she said. "That's why the Wall of Faces is there, to remind people, and to preserve the legacy of our service members."

So far, researchers have found photos of all the fallen Vietnam veterans from 44 states. Nationwide, there are about 353 missing photos of fallen Vietnam service members — mostly from New York and Puerto Rico — needed before the Wall of Faces is complete, she said.

While the Wall of Faces effort began in 2009, the search for photos of Pennsylvania's fallen Vietnam vets ramped up over the last few years, Zimmerman said, fueled by a team of volunteer researchers like Thomstatter.



But completing Pennsylvania's photo collection means the project is one step closer to accomplishing a decade-long mission.

Editor's Note: Information for this story was obtained from a December 3 story written by Philadelphia Inquirer reporter Oona Goodin-Smith.

Submitted by David Treffinger



Blue Angels' Florida 2020, 2021 schedule

The Blue Angels, U.S. Navy's Flight Demonstration Squadron, are scheduled to perform 55 demonstrations at 29 locations in 2020 and 56 demonstrations at 29 locations in 2021, the squadron's 75th Anniversary.

The mission of the Blue Angels is to showcase the precision and professionalism of the United States Navy and Marine Corps by inspiring a culture of excellence and service to country through flight demonstrations and community outreach. Since 1946, the Blue Angels have performed for more than 500 million fans.

Naval Air Station Jacksonville was the original home base of the Blue Angels. The team's current home is Pensacola.

They have seven Florida performances in 2020:

March 28-29: MacDill AFB, MacDill Air Fest.

April 25-26: Vero Beach, Vero Beach Air Show.

July 11: Pensacola Beach, Pensacola Beach Air Show.

October 16-17: NAS Pensacola, Blue Angels Homecoming Air Show.

The 2021 performances in Florida:

April 10-11: NAS Jacksonville

April 17-18: Lakeland

July 10: Pensacola Beach

November 10: NAS Pensacola

For information about individual air shows, please go to each air show's official website. For more information about the Blue Angels, including the 2020 and 2021 air show schedules, visit <http://www.blueangels.navy.mil>.

For more information, visit www.navy.mil, www.facebook.com/usnavy, or www.twitter.com/usnavy.

For more news from Navy Blue Angels, visit www.navy.mil/local/blueangels/, or contact Blue Angels Public Affairs at blueangelspublicaffairs@gmail.com.

Submitted by David Treffinger

Design Approved for Gulf War Memorial on National Mall

Military.com | By Richard Sisk

The effort to build a National Desert Storm Memorial on the National Mall in Washington, D.C., passed a significant milestone last week with formal approval of a design concept granted by the U.S. Commission on Fine Arts.

Now, the plan is to have the memorial dedicated by Veterans Day 2021, which would mark the 30th anniversary of the 1991 Gulf War, said Scott Stump, CEO and president of the National Desert Storm War Memorial Association. The design will be unveiled this week.



"Our eternal thanks go out to the entire design team, along with the Commission of Fine Arts and the National Park Service for helping us reach this very important milestone," Stump said in a statement.

Fundraising is still underway to meet the projected \$40 million cost of the memorial, at a site off Constitution Avenue near the Vietnam Memorial, to honor those who served in Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm and liberated Kuwait from the forces of Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein.

Related: Group Fights to Give War on Terror Vets Their Own Memorial in DC

The initial design called for a semi-circular wall to recall the "left hook" by U.S. ground forces through the Saudi desert to cut off Iraqi troops in Desert Storm. It would include the names of the fallen and the 34 countries that joined the U.S. coalition, according to the association's website.

The effort to establish a Global War on Terrorism Memorial is not as far advanced as the Desert Storm memorial. But it got a boost earlier in November with the introduction of a bill in the House by Reps. Jason Crow, D-Colorado, and Mike Gallagher, R-Wisconsin, that would designate three possible sites for the GWOT memorial.

One proposed site for the memorial, which has yet to get design approval, is near the Vietnam Veterans Memorial; another is near the Korean War Veterans Memorial; and a third is in West Potomac Park near the Franklin D. Roosevelt Memorial.

A GWOT memorial would be the first in the nation's capital for a war still underway. The project got past a roadblock in 2017 when Congress agreed to waive the requirement that the construction of war memorials on the Mall had to wait until 10 years after the conflict ended.

The Global War on Terrorism Memorial Foundation is now in the process of raising an estimated \$50 million for the project, with a proposed groundbreaking in 2022 and a dedication in 2024.

-- Richard Sisk can be reached at Richard.Sisk@Military.com.

VA announces plans to study military toxic exposures, connections to veteran illnesses

by Abbie Bennett

For years, veterans and their families have told stories of rare cancers, crippling respiratory illnesses, birth defects and more. Their conditions have confounded doctors and experts. How are these young, previously healthy troops and veterans falling so grievously ill? Why are they dying so quickly?



U.S. Marine Corps photo by Sgt. Anthony L. Ortiz / Released

For years those families have gone without official answers, though they have their theories. Some say they know unequivocally -- it's toxic exposure.

Now veterans have perhaps their first major signal that the Department of Veterans Affairs plans to pursue the matter further. VA researchers recently announced plans to conduct a major study on environmental exposures during military service and the connection to illnesses in those veterans. VA also plans to look at potential intergenerational effects of military exposures, which may or may not include studying children of exposed veterans.

VA Chief of Research Development Rachel Ramoni said VA scientists have spoken with hundreds of veterans about the toxic exposures they say they've experienced during deployments. Because of those conversations, Ramoni said VA is planning "major investment in toxic exposures."

Veterans of multiple eras have been frustrated by the wait times for VA recognition of and payout of benefits for different exposures, including Agent Orange and Gulf War illness.

Veterans "for good reason have been irritated with us as an organization because we have not done a lot of work, especially clinical work, on military exposures," Ramoni said during a conference in Washington, D.C. last week focused on veteran prostate cancer. "I have apologized to them ... I have committed that, in (Fiscal Year 2021), we are going to make major investments in toxic exposures. We are in the planning phases for that now, but in (Fiscal Year 2021), we will start to roll that out. That's something that will cut across all our research."

The scope of the study could also extend to veterans' children, as VA intends to consider intergenerational effects of exposures, Ramoni said.

"It's very hard to hear stories from veterans who bear ... guilt that their daughter ... had a hysterectomy at age three and wondering if it was because of his service," she said.

Sgt. Richard Vasquez previously told Connecting Vets in an exclusive story that he lost his unborn daughter Elizabeth to what he believes were birth defects caused by his exposure to toxins while deployed. One-third of Vasquez' Iraq platoon has either died or been sickened by toxic exposure.

In its annual survey, Wounded Warrior Project showed that more than 70 percent of its members say they have been exposed to hazardous chemicals or substances in what WWP called a "cross-generational problem." Of that more than 70 percent, 9 percent are getting VA treatment for their exposures.

Senators earlier this year asked VA what is taking so long to provide benefits to veterans exposed to potentially lethal toxins. Time and again, VA officials couldn't fully answer that question.

The VA estimates that as many as 3.5 million troops may have been exposed to airborne toxins since Sept. 11, 2001.

TAPS says toxic exposure-linked illnesses could soon kill more service members and veterans than suicide.

The plight of veterans affected by toxic exposure has even caught the attention of former Daily Show host and comedian Jon Stewart, who has turned from helping 9/11 first responders get benefits to focus now on veterans exposed to burn pits.

Ramoni's announcement came during her speech at a conference on veteran prostate cancer sponsored by "ZERO — The End of Prostate Cancer," a nonprofit advocacy group that has reported veterans are nearly twice as likely to have prostate cancer as non-veterans and that nearly half a million veterans are now being treated for prostate cancer at VA. Prostate cancer has previously been linked to Agent Orange exposure in veterans but has appeared in veterans of other conflicts after Vietnam.

Ramoni said veterans have told her of a "dizzying array" of exposures "so this is where this needs to be driven by scientists and the veterans working together."

"VA continually looks at medical research and follows trends related to medical conditions affecting veterans and is in the process of identifying possible areas of research regarding service-related exposures," VA spokeswoman Susan Carter confirmed to Connecting Vets, adding that the goal is to "finalize planning and begin research in 2021."

**Meet the first woman in the U.S. Army to earn a Silver Star for combat valor:
Sergeant Leigh Ann Hester.**

Ambushed by enemy forces in Salman Pak, eastern Iraq, on March 20, 2005. With enemy fire peppering the convoy, the 23-year-old sergeant directed her gunner to send MK19 rounds downrange into a ditch containing more than a dozen heavily armed insurgents.

Hester then dismounted her vehicle, lobbing rounds from her M203 grenade launcher and tossing two fragmentation grenades into the trench line before storming the area on foot.



Joined by her squad leader, Sgt. Hester quickly cut through two additional trenches, personally killing three enemies to her front in close-quarters combat with her M4.

With the irrigation ditches cleared, a cease fire was called. Forty-five minutes of sheer pandemonium had transpired.

Twenty-seven insurgents lay dead, six wounded, and one captured.

Every member of Hester's unit survived.

This excerpt was extracted from Militarytimes.com

Read the full article here:

<https://www.militarytimes.com/off-duty/military-culture/2019/06/14/this-sergeant-became-the-first-woman-in-the-us-army-to-earn-a-silver-star-for-combat-valor/>



From Rod Phillips

VVA 1048 E-Newsletter

<https://us11.campaign-archive.com/?u=5334e3105b98ebcfc43f02a7f&id=be80277e6b>



ROCKY BLEIER

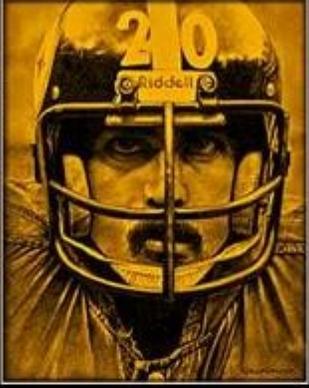
PITTSBURGH STEELERS





1975 1976





1979 1980






196TH LIB



AFTER HIS 1968 ROOKIE SEASON WITH THE PITTSBURGH STEELERS, BLEIER WAS DRAFTED INTO THE U.S. ARMY IN DECEMBER 1968. HE VOLUNTEERED FOR DUTY IN THE VIETNAM WAR AND SHIPPED OUT IN MAY 1969, SERVING WITH THE 196TH LIGHT INFANTRY BRIGADE. ON AUGUST 20, WHILE ON PATROL IN HEIP DUC, BLEIER WAS WOUNDED IN THE LEFT THIGH BY A RIFLE BULLET WHEN HIS PLATOON WAS AMBUSHED IN A RICE PADDY. WHILE DOWN, AN ENEMY GRENADE LANDED NEARBY AFTER BOUNCING OFF A FELLOW SOLDIER, SENDING SHRAPNEL INTO HIS LOWER RIGHT LEG. HE LOST PART OF HIS RIGHT FOOT IN THE BLAST AS WELL. HE WAS LATER AWARDED THE PURPLE HEART AND THE BRONZE STAR. HIS RANK WAS SPECIALIST 4.

WHILE HE WAS RECOVERING IN A HOSPITAL IN TOKYO, DOCTORS TOLD HIM THAT HE WOULD NOT PLAY FOOTBALL AGAIN. SOON AFTER, HE RECEIVED A POSTCARD FROM STEELERS OWNER ART ROONEY WHICH JUST READ "ROCK - THE TEAM'S NOT DOING WELL. WE NEED YOU. ART ROONEY".

BLEIER LATER SAID "WHEN YOU HAVE SOMEBODY TAKE THE TIME AND INTEREST TO SEND YOU A POSTCARD, SOMETHING THAT THEY DIDN'T HAVE TO DO, YOU HAVE A SPECIAL PLACE FOR THOSE KIND OF PEOPLE".

20

20

FACEBOOK.COM/JOSSEMP
©2018 JINAPORAPHICS #001

Florida Veterans looking for recreational experiences can connect to this week's #FloFri resource, Operation Outdoor Freedom

That's right, the Florida Forest Service leads recreational and rehabilitative opportunities for wounded veterans at no cost. Visit the website at:

<https://www.fdacs.gov/Divisions-Offices/Florida-Forest-Service/Recreation/Operation-Outdoor-Freedom>

If you have attended one of their events, share photos and information about your experience. This is a program Florida veterans with service-connected disabilities need to enjoy! Be sure to share this post with veterans that may be interested in attending.

#FloFri
Every Friday we share benefit information
for Florida Veterans on our Social Pages

**OPERATION
OUTDOOR
FREEDOM**
FLORIDA DEPARTMENT of AGRICULTURE and CONSUMER SERVICES
OUTDOOR OPPORTUNITIES for FLORIDA'S WOUNDED VETERANS

ZAHARA
VETERANS NETWORK, INC.

LEARN MORE AT:
WWW.ZAHARAVETS.ORG
SHARE OUR MISSION:
#ZAHARAVETS



Gimme 2 Seconds

A Public Awareness And Motorcycle Safety Program



In Memory Of All Fallen Riders

Feb 22nd, 2020

Breakfast available @ Post 9
Registration – 8am

Donations to Safety Program Accepted

Bike Ride – KSU @ 10am –
American Legion Post 9

Stop 1 - Nassau Moose Lodge
2352

Stop 2 - Post 283 Arlington

Stop 3 - Post 129 Jax Beach

Stop 4 - Amy's Place Orange
Park

Last Bike In – Dee's Music Bar
& Grill @ 5pm

Presentations by various
riding groups!

American Legion Post 9
6242 Soutel Court
Jacksonville FL 32219

For more information please contact Grace Lord (904) 504-6362
Brad Roberson (904) 610-0866



2141 Loch Rane Blvd
Suite #140 Orange Park

Any Vehicle
Welcome



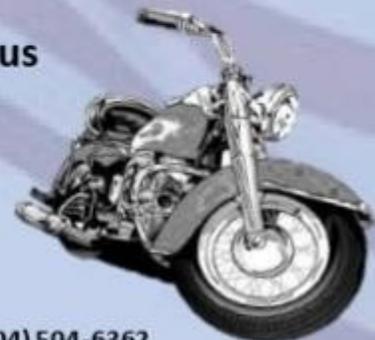
Children's
Activities



Hot Mess on
Stage @ 8



Fun!





From: "We are the Mighty"

This is what different berets mean in the Army and Air Force

Spend any amount of time on or around an Army or Air Force post and you'll be sure to find a number of beret-wearing service members around you.

Hell, you're going to be greeted by a blue beret each and every time you get to an Air Force gate and, if you were on any Army post between 2001 and 2011, you saw black berets everywhere you went, as they were a part of standard Army uniform.

Got it — but what about the less commonly seen berets? The green, the tan, and the maroon?

This is what berets of all colors mean in the Army and Air Force.

Black — U.S. Army: A black beret is worn by all soldiers in service dress unless they are otherwise authorized to wear a different, distinctive beret. U.S. Air Force Tactical Air Control Party. A black beret is the official headgear of the Air Force TACP. They're about as operator as you get in the Air Force without becoming para-rescue or combat control.

Blue — U.S. Air Force Security Forces: The most common beret across all branches of service as of writing. Security Forces (the Air Force's version of Military Police) wear the blue beret with every uniform whenever not deployed or in certain training. [Show sharing options](#)

Green — U.S. Army Special Forces: This is the cream of the crop of the U.S. Army. The green beret is the single most recognizable sign of a badass.

Grey — U.S. Air Force Survival, Evasion, Resistance, Escape. These guys teach most of the other badasses on this list how to survive in the worst conditions. That definitely qualifies them for their own beret.

Maroon — U.S. Army Airborne: Aside from the Army's green beret, the maroon beret of Army airborne is one of the easiest to recognize. These guys drop into any situation with complete operational capability.

Maroon — U.S. Air Force Pararescue. In the Air Force, the maroon beret means something completely different. While being Army Airborne is an amazing distinction, the Air Force Pararescuemen are truly elite. The introductory course has one of the highest failure rates of all military schools and the ones that do complete it go on to become the kind of guy that you do not want to fight in a bar.

Pewter Grey — U.S. Air Force Special Operations Weather. These guys do weather in the most undesirable conditions. I know that may not sound very operator, but just take a quick look at the training they endure and the types of operations they conduct and you won't ever question their beret again.

Tan — U.S. Army Rangers. The Army Rangers began wearing tan berets in 2001 when the Army made the black beret the standard headgear for the entire Army. Prior to that, they owned the black beret.

Scarlet — U.S. Air Force Combat Control. The scarlet beret is the headgear of the U.S. Combat Controller. Their beret is one you'll rarely see because they're always on the go, doing what they were trained to do... which is classified.

Veterans will get access to Commissary, Exchange, and MWR services

The Commissary is about to get a lot busier on Saturdays. Starting in January 2020, veterans with service-connected disability ratings, Purple Heart recipients, and former POWs will be able to access Exchange and Commissary services both in-person and online. Designated caregivers of eligible vets will have access too. The benefit goes into effect for all Exchange services, including NEX, AAFES, CGX, and MCX. But that's not all.



Veterans will get access to on-base Morale, Welfare, and Recreation services too.

To get access to the AAFES Exchanges, Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard Exchanges, Commissary, and MWR facilities, including the American Forces Travel site, all you need is a Veterans Health Identification Card, the one issued to you by the VA when you enroll in VA Healthcare. This will give you access to on-base facilities. For veterans who aren't enrolled in the VA system, they will not be able to access U.S. military installations, but will still have access to the Exchange websites.

What's especially great about the new rules is expanding access to veteran caregivers. Designated primary caregivers for eligible veterans will be able to get on base to these facilities without their veteran being present as long as they have the eligibility letter they will receive from the VA's Office of Community Care.

These are just the new recipients of these benefits. Medal of Honor recipients and 100 percent service-connected disabled veterans have always had access to Exchange and Commissary services, and they still will.

The move comes from the passage of the Purple Heart and Disabled Veterans Equal Access Act of 2018 that funds the improvement of physical access control on military installations to give expanded access to these facilities to disabled veterans and their caretakers. It's a smart move for the Exchange services and the Defense Commissary Agency, both of which have struggled to expand their customer base over the past decade. After the success of allowing vets to use online Exchange services in 2017, the new bill expanded access to physical locations as well.

With the MWR facilities included in the new benefit, this means veterans and caretakers will also have access to RV campgrounds, recreational lodging, bowling alleys, movie theaters, and more.

VA is expected to start processing Blue Water Navy claims Jan. 1. Here's what to know.

Abbie Bennett

After a federal court declined to lift a delay on Blue Water Navy disability claims imposed by the Department of Veterans Affairs, claims processing is expected to begin Jan. 1, 2020.

Veterans can file their claims now, though, VA told Connecting Vets, and any Blue Water veterans previously denied for Agent Orange presumption should send in new claims. Veterans and their families do not have to wait for Jan. 1 to begin filing their claims.

Here's what you need to know:

Veterans potentially qualify if they served on a U.S. military vessel that operated in inland waterways of Vietnam or served on a vessel no more than 12 nautical miles seaward from the demarcation line of the waters of Vietnam and Cambodia from Jan. 9, 1962 to May 7, 1975.

Veterans 85 and older or those with life-threatening illnesses should have priority in claims processing.

A veteran's family can submit a claim on their behalf if the veteran died before Jan. 1, 2020.

Veterans need to submit a VA Form 21-526EZ for initial compensation claims. For initial survivor claims, submit a VA Form 21P-534EZ.

If a veteran or surviving family member's claim was previously denied, it must be resubmitted under the new law. VA will provide back-pay to the date of the original claim only in certain cases. For previously denied claims, submit a VA Form 20-0995.

Veterans or family members should be prepared to include any evidence of service in the offshore waters of Vietnam during the required timeframe, including names of vessels and dates of service.

To qualify, the veteran must have or have had an illness VA considers caused by Agent Orange. A list of the diseases currently linked to Agent Orange and eligible for benefits can be found [here](#).

Veterans can qualify for health care, compensation or an Agent Orange registry health exam.

Veterans will not have to show that their Agent Orange-connected illness started during or got worse because of military service, only that they may have been exposed because of where they



served. If a veteran has an illness that is not on the VA's list of Agent Orange-connected illnesses, they will have to provide scientific or medical evidence linking it to the toxic herbicide or show that the problem began during or got worse because of military service.

Veterans who want more information from the VA can call 800-827-1000, go to their nearest VA regional benefit office or [click here](#).

To find out if the ship you or your veteran served on had contact with Agent Orange, [click here](#).

Decades of waiting

After decades of trying to win disability benefits from VA, earlier this year, Congress passed and President Donald Trump signed into law the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act. The law grants many of the veterans who served off the coast of Vietnam disability benefits for exposure to the toxic herbicide.

Shortly after that bill passed, though, VA Secretary Robert Wilkie invoked a measure in the law that allowed him to stay those claims and not begin processing them until the law officially goes into effect on Jan. 1, as first reported by [Connecting Vets](#).

A lawsuit attempted to overturn that stay, but a federal court ruled that the original law allowed Wilkie to issue the delay.

The lawsuit also attempted to clarify the *Procopio v. Wilkie* Federal Circuit Court decision, which reversed a 1997 VA decision to deny that Blue Water veterans were exposed to Agent Orange while serving offshore of Vietnam. The *Procopio* decision earlier this year meant that the VA should presume veterans who served in the waters off the coast were exposed to Agent Orange at some point during their service, and as a result were eligible for related VA benefits.

But both routes to benefits for Blue Water veterans were shut down by the stay and with the court's decision, will remain closed until the first of the year at the earliest.

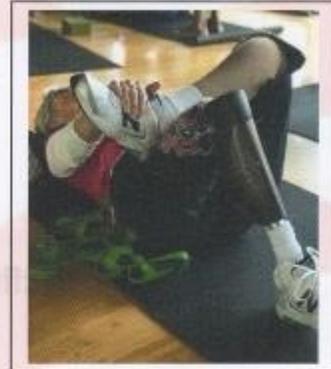
More than 400,000 veterans or surviving family members could be eligible for benefits, according to VA. About 77,000 Blue Water veterans were previously denied claims by VA.

Reach Abbie Bennett: abbie@connectingvets.com or [@AbbieRBennett](#).

ACTIVITIES FOR VETERANS

Brooks Adaptive Sports and Recreation invites all veterans living with a physical or visual impairment to participate in our NEW veteran exclusive activities!

You are welcome to participate in these veteran exclusive activities as well as our regular programming. For details or to get on our email list, please contact 904-345-7314 or Michelle.Walker2@Brooksrehab.org.



Brooks Adaptive Sports and Recreation - Jacksonville



BrooksAdaptiveSports



Brooks_ASR



904.345.7314 | adaptivesports@brooksrehab.org

BrooksRehab.org

Yoga 4 Change at Brooks Family YMCA

4:15pm - 5:15pm

Every Monday

Trap Shooting at Jacksonville Clay Target Sports

2:00pm - 4:00pm

November 6th

December 4th

January 8th

Cycling at Jacksonville-Baldwin Rail Trail

10:00am - 12:00pm

November 12th

December 10th

January 14th

Kayak at Hanna Park

10:00am - 12:00pm

November 20th

December 18th

January 15th

Golf at Jacksonville Beach Golf Club

9:00am - 11:00am

November 26th

December 17th

January 28th



904.345.7314 | adaptivesports@brooksrehab.org

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ACTIVE DUTY ★ RETIRED ★ NATIONAL GUARD & RESERVE ★ ALL SERVICE BRANCHES

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Lake Chatuge
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From Thursday at 5:30pm – Sunday at 2:00pm



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*Strengthen and restore connections, enjoy the natural beauty of each location,
be inspired by fun outdoor activities, learn about available support resources,
and relax while discovering post-deployment strategies.*

★ Small, friendly group setting ★

★ All accommodations, food, and activities are provided free of charge ★

★ Facilitated by Vets, VA/DoD experts, and Community Nonprofit Support Organizations ★

Please note: Must be 18 to attend and no childcare is provided.

TO LEARN MORE AND TO APPLY VISIT: GRATITUDEAMERICA.ORG/RETREATS



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678-315-9028
JACK@GRATITUDEAMERICA.ORG





US VRC ... 18.pdf



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The primary mission of the U.S. Veteran Reserve Corps is to utilize the years of service, leadership, skill, talent, and expertise gathered from both our veteran and civilian members. We stand ready to provide competent supplemental professional and technical support to our communities for readiness and response during times of disaster or emergency. Drawing on the fraternal nature, dedication to purpose, and leadership skills inherent in a military and service-oriented community, the U.S. VRC provides a source of trained and ready volunteers eager to assist when needed.

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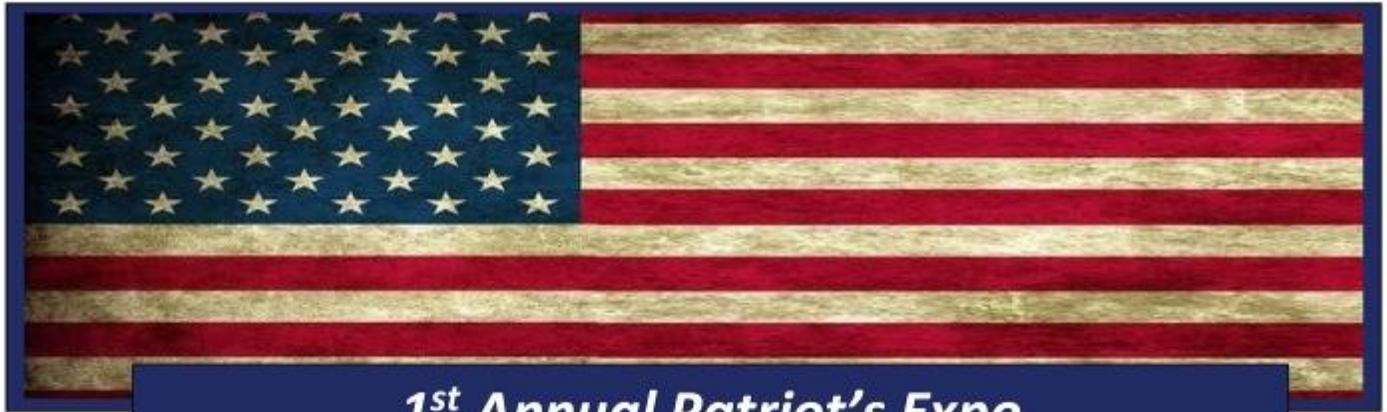
Company A, 10th U.S. Veteran Reserve Corps, Washington, D.C. May 1945. By James Gardner



US VRC, Memorial for America 2017



Veteran Reserve Corps Soldiers guarding President Lincoln's Funeral Car By Samuel M. Farnell



1st Annual Patriot's Expo

Partnering with
First Coast Technical College Job Fair
Character Counts Conference Center
2980 Collins Avenue
St. Augustine

Thursday, March 26, 2020
2:30 PM – 4:30 PM

Networking event for St Johns County area Patriots and Patriots families

- Static Displays
- Education & Training
- Banking
- Logistics
- Healthcare/VA Resources
- Mental Health Resources
- Job Fair – Career & Employment Services
- Transition & Business opportunities
- Home & Family Services
- Information Technology
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(904) 547-3282



FCTC Spring 2020 Job Fair and St John's Patriot Expo Registration Form

It is important our students have the ability to complete their training/education in full prior to accepting employment that might conflict with this goal. FCTC asks that our employment and business partners refrain from actively recruiting and hiring students that are currently taking classes into a role that will interfere with their ability to complete their education in the designated timeframe.

In addition, we require the participating businesses to be ready no later than 2:15PM and stay for the entire event, packing up to start after 4:30PM. We encourage trinkets and table giveaways.

PLEASE COMPLETE ALL THE QUESTIONS BELOW:

Company Name: _____

Contact Name/Title: _____

Contact email: _____

Number at table: _____ Patriots Expo Table: YES NO

Program(s) of interest: _____

- Please check if your company sponsors, employs and supports our military.
- Yes, I would like to participate in the FCTC Spring 2020 Job Fair on **March 26, 2020** and agree to adhere to the guidelines as stated above.
- Unfortunately, a representative from my company will not be able to attend this time, but keep me on your list for next year.

Display Requests:

We will supply table and 2 chairs, let us know if you need electrical or any other specifications **PRIOR** to arrive (we cannot guarantee availability day of)

Please bring Table Cover, Displays, Business Cards, and Table Giveaways

Please submit this registration **No Later than March 5, 2020**

SPACE IS LIMITED SO PLEASE RESPOND ASAP

Email completed form to Beth.Abstein@stjohns.k12.fl.us

FCTC Job Fair Questions, call Beth Abstein (904)547-3389 Military Event Questions, call Wendy Lay (904)547-3512

PRESIDENTIAL SAILORS



GEORGE H.W. BUSH

FLEW TORPEDO BOMBERS FROM THE DECK OF THE USS SAN JACINTO, EARNING A DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS AND NUMEROUS AIR MEDALS BEFORE BEING SHOT DOWN BY ANTI-AIRCRAFT FIRE DURING WWII.

JIMMY E. CARTER JR.

IS THE ONLY PRESIDENT TO GRADUATE FROM THE UNITED STATES NAVAL ACADEMY. HE WENT ON TO BE SELECTED FOR SERVICE IN NUCLEAR SUBMARINES BY ADMIRAL HYMAN G. RICKOVER.



GERALD R. FORD

SERVED IN NINE COMBAT OPERATIONS. ACHIEVED THE RANK OF LIEUTENANT COMMANDER. NEXT-GENERATION CLASS OF AIRCRAFT CARRIERS IS NAMED IN HIS HONOR.

RICHARD M. NIXON

HEADED UP A SERIES OF NAVY CARGO HANDLING UNITS AROUND THE PACIFIC DURING WORLD WAR II, ACHIEVING THE RANK OF COMMANDER IN THE NAVAL RESERVE DURING WWII.



LYNDON B. JOHNSON

TOOK A LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES TO SERVE IN THE SOUTH PACIFIC, EARNING A SILVER STAR WHILE FLYING AS AN OBSERVER ON A B-26 BOMBING MISSION DURING WWII.

JOHN F. KENNEDY

EARNED THE NAVY AND MARINE CORPS MEDAL AFTER SAVING THE LIVES OF HIS CREW FOLLOWING THE SINKING OF THE PT-109 DURING WWII.



From Blair Craig

VA Releases Survivors Quick Start Guide

Reference guide to help during final arrangements planning

Each person experiences grief differently when a loved one passes, but survivors should not feel confused about what to do next. The Survivors Quick Start Guide provides Veteran family members and caregivers a reference guide for what to do next.

Part of VA's Welcome Kit, the Survivors quick start guide begins with a step by step checklist for preparing, applying for, and following up on the available benefits. Each step spells out in plain language what to do, what forms to fill out, and who to call if you need help.

The guide also helps families identify VA Survivor benefits and services they may be eligible for.

To view VA Survivors Guide, here is the link:

<https://www.va.gov/survivor-quick-start-guide.pdf>

The 75th Ranger Regiment

The history of Long Range Reconnaissance Patrol (LRRP—pronounced "Lurp"), LRP, and Ranger units deployed during the Cold War in Europe and Vietnam is based on three time periods: 1) LRRP from late 1965 to 20 December 1967; 2) LRP from late December 1967 through January 1969; and 3) Ranger from 1 February 1969, to 1972 when the Vietnam War drew down and the U.S. Vietnam Ranger units were deactivated. However, in 1974 their colors and lineage were passed to newly formed Ranger Battalions based in the United States.



Dept. of Florida Military Order of the Purple Heart

Steve and Sally Hilbmann we're treated to a warm farewell as they both take a step back from volunteering with the MOPH and MOPHA after nearly 4 decades of service.



The Department Commander, Chris Vedrick, presented Patriot Hilbmann a plaque for being the standard bearer for selfless service both in Lakeland and throughout the Department. Sally Hilbmann was presented a gift by the Auxiliary Department President in order to recognize her continued altruism and dedication to Veterans.

Good luck Hilbmann family and we hope to see you again soon.

The Veterans Council of St. Johns County Website has been updated to include:

<http://www.veteranscouncilsjc.org/>

Main page: Veterans Day flyer, with a link to the press release document, Navigation bars now include:

Upcoming events (for 2019)

<https://veteranscouncilsjc.org/events.htm>

SJVC Highlights for 2018 <https://veteranscouncilsjc.org/index.htm/files/VC%202018%20Summary.pdf>

Past event for 2018 <https://veteranscouncilsjc.org/events2018.htm>

Veterans Resource Spreadsheet <https://veteranscouncilsjc.org/index.htm/files/>

[VeteranResourceSpreadsheetUpdated2017.10.12.pdf](https://veteranscouncilsjc.org/index.htm/files/VeteranResourceSpreadsheetUpdated2017.10.12.pdf)



The American Legion



NORTHERN AREA BALL COMMANDER MARIE K. CONTI

Where: American Legion Post #155

6585 W. Gulf To Lake HWY

Crystal River, FL 34429

Post Number: 352-795-6526

FRIDAY: American Legion Post #155

FULL RACK of "BABY-BACK Ribs"

Dinner \$15 includes one "Bar Drink" Ticket if paid ahead. Dinner 5-6:30pm, followed by Entertainment and Northern Area CDR's Pre-Ball Social in the Lounge!

_____ \$15 per ticket (Includes **FREE Bar Drink Ticket**) Advanced Price.

SATURDAY: NA BALL 5PM-?

_____ \$25.00 per person (Limited Seating)

Program Ads:

_____ 1/4 Page \$20

_____ 1/2 Page \$25

_____ Full Page \$40

Deadline for Ads March 11, 2020

Email Ads in Word or JPG Format

Email to Jconti3547@gmail.com or mail clean copy!

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Hampton Inn

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All Rooms are either One King Bed or 2 Queen Beds and come equipped with a Microwave, MINI Fridge, Coffee and very nice Pool!

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Event Coordinator

Please contact PDC Jay Conti Sr. 352-287-1400 or mail payment (s) with attached form to

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Jay Conti Sr.

7130 N. Grackle Pt

Hernando, FL 34442

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10605 Theresa Drive, Suite 5
Jacksonville, FL 32246
Office: 904-900-4776



Mission Statement:

The Veterans Council of St. Johns County, Inc. is a 501 C3 Not-For-Profit Florida Corporation.



The Veterans Council of St. Johns County is comprised of representatives from various veterans' organizations that work with city and county governments and organizations to assist with matters concerning veterans and veterans' activities.

What the Council has done:

- The Veterans Treatment Court
 - Wreaths Across America
 - Homeless Veterans Standdown
 - Veterans Day Parade
 - Vets 4 Vets
- And so much more...

SA-0003147064-01

POST TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER AWARENESS

NOT ALL WOUNDS ARE VISIBLE...

11%-20% OF
OEF/OIF VETERANS
SUFFER FROM
PTSD



SYMPTOMS:

- FLASHBACKS
- NIGHTMARES
- FEELING ON EDGE
- TROUBLE SLEEPING
- HYPERVIGILANCE
- OVERWHELMING GUILT OR SHAME
- LOSS OF INTEREST IN ENJOYABLE ACTIVITIES
- SELF-DESTRUCTIVE BEHAVIOR
- STAYING AWAY FROM PLACES, EVENTS, OR OBJECTS THAT ARE REMINDERS OF THE EXPERIENCE
- HAVING DIFFICULTY SLEEPING, AND/OR HAVING ANGRY OUTBURSTS
- NEGATIVE THOUGHTS ABOUT ONESELF OR THE WORLD
- FEELING EMOTIONALLY NUMB

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- NEUROFEEDBACK
- HOLISTIC ALTERNATIVE THERAPIES



A question we all may have to ask some day. What should I do if a Veteran passes away?

SECTION 8 Partial list of action to be undertaken upon the death of veteran or retiree.

1. Contact Funeral Director to set-up funeral arrangements and Military Honors (PAFB Mortuary Affairs)
2. Notify Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) (<https://cust-support.dfas.mil/rapiti/nod/>) or call 1-888-332-741
3. Notify Veterans Administration 1-800-827-1000
4. Notify Social Security Administration 1-800-772-1213
5. Notify Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS) 1-800-538-9552
6. Notify VA Life Insurance, if applicable 1-800-669-8477
7. Notify SGLI and VGLI Insurance, if applicable 1-800-419-1473
8. Notify Civil Service Retirement System, if applicable 1-888-767-6738
9. Obtain at least 10 certified copies of long form death certificate and 10 copies of short form death certificate from Funerary Directors
10. Notify Life insurance companies, and file appropriate claims
11. Notify Medical, health, disability, travel and accident insurance companies, and file appropriate claims
12. Notify Home owners insurance company
13. Notify Vehicle insurance company
14. Go to the County Property Appraiser's Office and transfer all real estate properties to surviving spouse.
15. Apply for widowed person's Homestead Exemption
16. Apply for appropriate (VA, Civil Service and other) benefits, if applicable
17. Apply for Veterans Burial Benefits and Survivor Benefits, if applicable
18. Check for non-government pension benefits, if applicable
19. Apply for Workmen's Compensation Benefits if applicable.
20. Notify your Accountant or Tax Preparer (unless Estate Lawyer is preparing the final tax returns) provide certified death certificate, previously filed tax return forms, and current earnings and dividend statements.
21. Notify your investment broker or company.
22. Change ownership of joint or solely owned stocks, mutual funds, etc.
23. Cancel any unfulfilled orders arranged by the deceased
24. Notify IRAs and other retirement and investment account administrators
25. Transfer the ownership of bonds
26. Notify your bank(s) and credit union(s)
27. Change all jointly held accounts and correct tax identification numbers (usually Social Security Numbers) (Leave joint accounts intact for 6 months)
28. Cancel direct deposit retirement benefit payments (for SBP, Civil Service and others, if applicable)
29. Re-establish the Title of your safe deposit box
30. Re-establish all outstanding mortgages, personal notes, etc.
31. Apply for any credit life insurance that may exist on loans, credit cards, and mortgages
32. Change Certificates of Deposit
33. Go to Department Of Motor Vehicles (DMV) to transfer titles of all registered vehicles, mobile homes and boats.
34. Notify all credit card companies and cancel all individually held cards of the deceased
35. Review trusts for required actions, if required.
36. If a Will must be probated, contact your attorney. Your name may also need to be revised.
37. Cancel the deceased's Voter Registration and Drivers License.
38. Obtain new military identification cards. Make appointment at <https://rapids-appointments.dmdc.osd.mil/default.asp> or contact Patrick AFB ID Card Section at 321-494-6144/6147
39. Send "Thank You" cards for flowers, memorial donations, food, etc.

From Nila Thompson

rans
s Line



**Veterans
Crisis Line**

73-8255
PRESS 1

1-800-273-8255 PRESS 1

**Veterans
Crisis Line**
00-273-8255 PRESS 1



STAND BY THEM

Confidential help for
Veterans and their families

**Veterans
Crisis Line**
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..... Confidential chat at VeteransCrisisLine.net or text to 838255

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www.suicideline.org

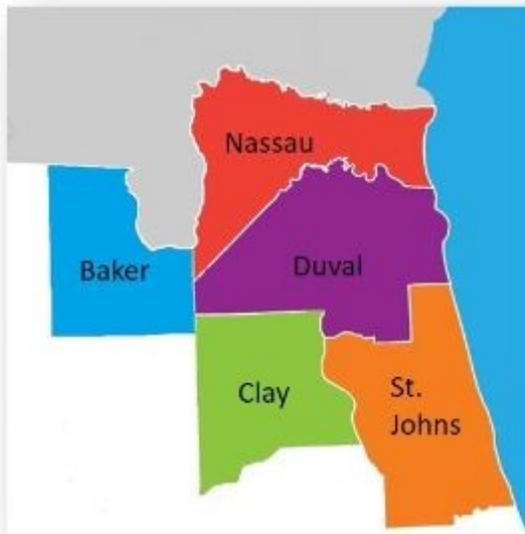
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**Veterans
Crisis Line**
1-800-273-8255 PRESS 1

Veterans Councils of Northeast Florida



NASSAU COUNTY

President: Doc Monaghan

Meetings:

First Thursday of each month

Location:

**American Legion Post 54
626 South 3rd St
Fernandina Beach FL 32034**

Time: 1900 (7pm)

DUVAL COUNTY

President: Steve Spickelmier

Meetings:

Third Tuesday of each month

Location:

**American Legion Post 137
Moon Building
5443 San Juan Avenue**

Time: 1900 (7pm)

BAKER COUNTY

President: Larry Porterfield

Meetings:

Second Thursday of each month

Location:

**MacClenny Primitive Baptist Church
Fellowship Hall on North Boulevard**

Time: 1800 (6pm)

CLAY COUNTY

President: Harry Silvers

Meetings:

First Wednesday of each month

Location:

**American Legion Post 250
3939 County Rd 218
Middleburg, FL 32068**

Time: 1400 (2pm)

ST. JOHNS COUNTY

President: Bill Dudley

Meetings:

Last Thursday of each month

Location:

**Health and Human Services Bldg
Muscovy Room, 1st Floor
200 San Sebastian View
St. Augustine, FL 3208**

Time: 1900 (7pm)

Contact Nila Thompson with updates
Nila.ThompsonV4V@gmail.com

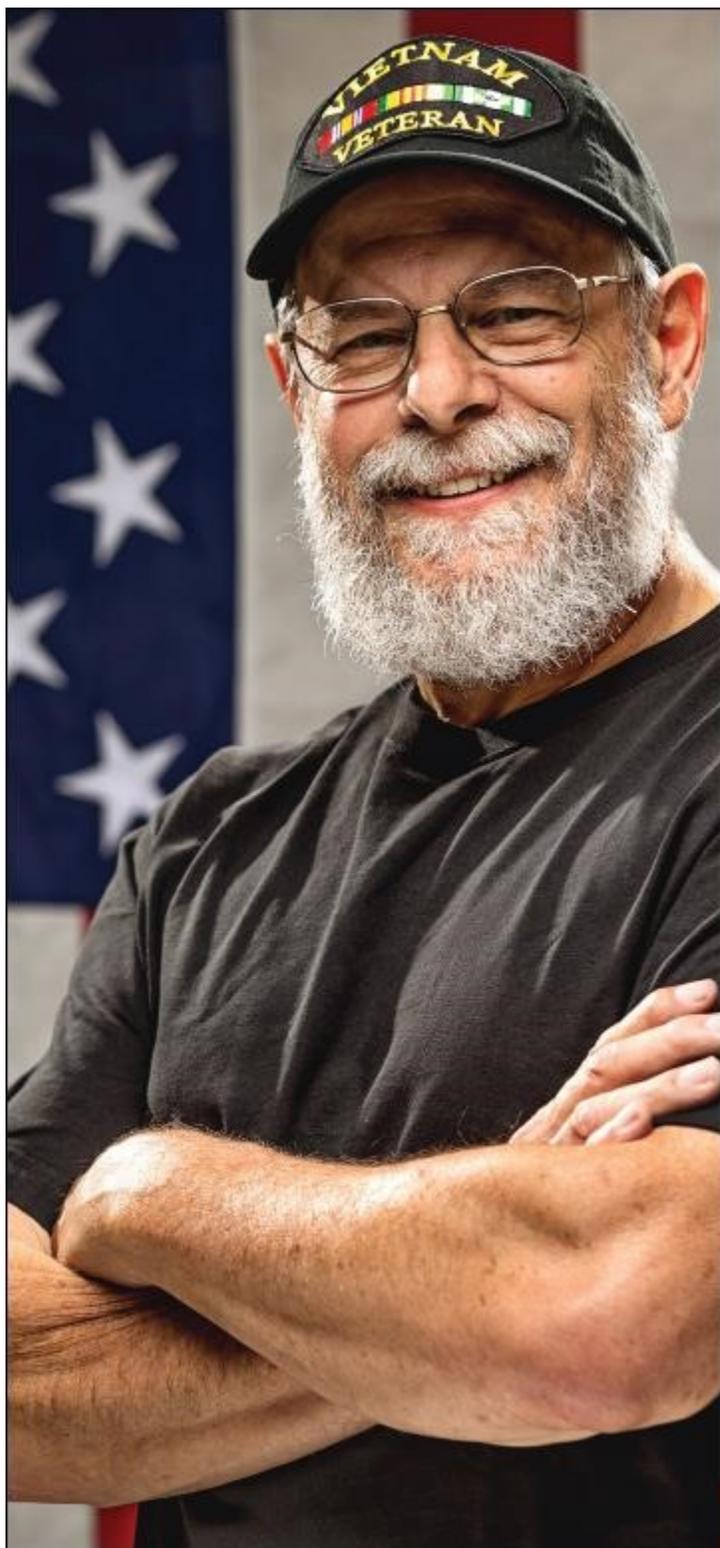
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Corazoncinemaandcafe.com



Stop by the Corazon Cinema and Café located in the heart of St. Augustine to catch a great film or a bite to eat (free parking). **Tell us you are a veteran and receive 10% off any food or drinks.** Beer and wine available.



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- ★ We Honor Veterans Program

For more information about our We Honor Veterans program, any of our services or to become a veteran volunteer, call toll-free **866.253.6681** or go to **Veterans.CommunityHospice.com**.



"I've proudly served as Chairman of the Community Hospice Veterans Partnership (CHVP) since 2011. CHVP partners with veterans service groups throughout the community to listen and learn how Community Hospice & Palliative Care can best serve our unique needs."

**Bob Buehn, Captain, United States Navy (Ret.)
Chairman, Community Hospice Veterans Partnership
(2011 - present)**





Salute Our Heroes in Their Final Days: Support Flags & Pins for Veterans in Hospice Care

Honor our local veterans in hospice care with a dignified tradition when you support funding for flags and pins through Community Hospice & Palliative Care.

Since 2008, the Jacksonville-based organization has presented all veterans admitted to its hospice program with a commemorative pin to honor their service, as well as a certificate of appreciation. For veterans who get care at one of our eight inpatient centers, staff and volunteers erect the flag of the service branch in which they served outside their rooms. Flags are then presented to veterans' families following the death.



The need for funding is great as up to 25 percent of patients who receive hospice care at Community Hospice & Palliative Care are veterans. The nonprofit organization, which provides hospice care to nearly 1,300 patients each day, raises funds through individual support and community organizations who believe in serving those who have served our country so honorably.

If you or your organization would like to support our Flags & Pins Initiative and honor our warriors one last time, please contact

Toula Wootan, director of community programs at Community Hospice & Palliative Care, at 904.407.6211 or twootan@communityhospice.com.

The Veterans Council of St. Johns County is proud to announce that it has modernized its website and created a Facebook page.



We are inviting all veterans to visit our website at:

NEW <http://www.veteranscouncilsjc.org>

The Veterans Council will post items of interest to all veterans, post pictures, articles, flyers, events, etc. We will post our meetings dates and keep you informed about events at the Jacksonville and St. Augustine National Cemeteries.

Please join our group on Facebook at:

<http://veteranscouncilsjc.org>

Please select **Join the Group** to become a member

Once you have joined the Veterans Council Facebook group you will be able to post your meetings, pictures, articles, fund raisers, etc. It will be your common site to go to and see what's happening.

The website and Facebook page were updated and created so that there would be a central place to list all veterans activities in NE FL.

You may have noticed the Veterans Council's new logo, it was created by Roy Havekost and his web design company PageAuthors. The VC strongly recommends that you contact Roy, 727-487-6252, if you or your vet group wants to create a website or Facebook page.

NEW INFO: Ride in comfort to your appointments at the VA Medical Center in Gainesville.



The van is provided by the Disabled Veterans Chapter 6, and leaves no later than 6AM from the new VA Clinic location at 195 Southpark Blvd. The corner of Southpark and Old Moultrie Road.

To schedule your seat please contact the VA Clinic at 904-823-2954 and ask for Veteran Van Scheduling.



**SURVIVOR
OUTREACH SERVICES**

Survivor Outreach Offers Free Services to
Surviving Spouses and Family Members of Military Retirees

Contact Keith Ham

Survivor Outreach Services Support Coordinator, HRCI Contractor
310 Charlotte Street, St. Augustine, FL 32084
Office: 904-823-0157 Cell: 904-472-7689
Email: keith.e.ham.ctr@mail.mil

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*Veterans Council of St. Johns County,
“Helping All Veterans”*

The Veterans Council of St. Johns County welcomes article submissions from all County Veterans & organizations. Articles should be of interest to all and veterans related. Submissions may be edited &/or shortened and used if space permits.

Send to: rothfeldm@gmail.com



**The Veterans Council of St. Johns County, Inc. is a
Not For Profit Florida Corporation.**

Our formation date was July 4, 2001 in a proclamation issued by the St. Johns County Commissioners. It is composed of representatives of the various veterans' organizations within St. Johns County.

The Veteran's Council will work with city and county governments and other local organizations to achieve the mutual goal to provide a central agency to assist in the coordination and presentation of matters concerning veterans and veterans activities in St. Johns County.

The Veteran's Council will endeavor to precipitate, stimulate and assist various organizations as they perform patriotic events. One of the major purposes is the promotion and education of national patriotic matters.

**The St. Johns County Veterans Council meets the
last Thursday of the month at 7 pm.**

***The Veterans Council will meet at the St.
Johns County Health & Human Services
Building, 200 San Sebastian View
Muscovy Room, 1st floor***

**Veterans Service Office
200 San Sebastian View, Suite 1400
St. Augustine, FL 32084**

*(physical location)
The VSO Office is located in the St. Johns County Health and
Human Services Building.*

*The office is open from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. daily,
Monday through Friday excluding holidays.*

*Service is by appointment.
Phone: 904-209-6160 Fax: 904-209-6161
Joseph McDermott, SR VSO
Rick Rees, Assistant VSO
Travis Neidig, Assistant VSO*

The views expressed in The Patriot Reader Newsletter articles, submissions and spotlights are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the Veterans Council of St. Johns County or the editors of The Patriot Reader. It is the purpose of this periodical to share a variety of information that pertain to local veterans and their organizations.